THE WEAK BELEEVER RESOLVED.

Believer K

In a Dialogue between a worthy Minister and a weak Beleever.

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2 COR. 13. 5.

Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

LONDON;

Printed by *Matthew Simmons* for *Humfrey Blunden*, at the Castle in Corn-hill.

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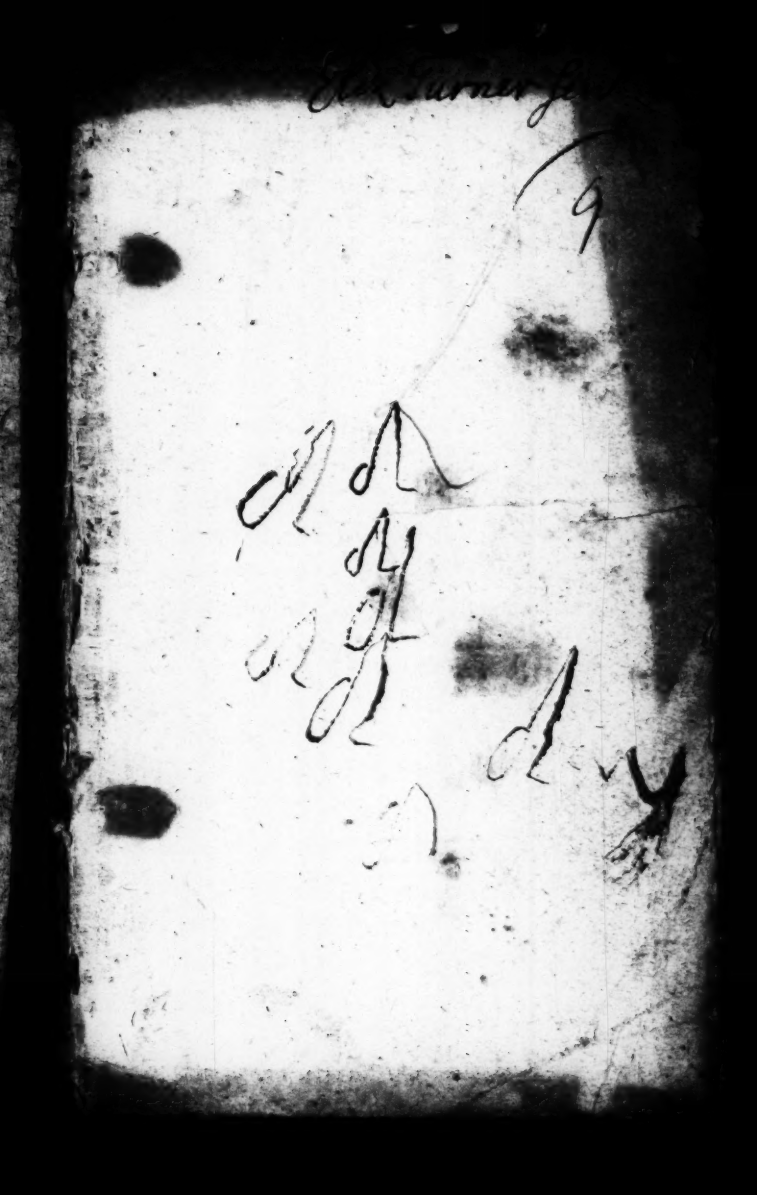

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BRITISH
MUSEUM

A DIALOGUE between a Miniſter AND A weake Beleever.

Miniſter.

NEighbour *James*, I am glad to ſee you: But why are you ſo ſad, man? you are alwayes heavie, what's the cauſe? I pray you let me know.

Neigh. I thanke GOD for your love to mee, and care of mee: but for my heavineſſe, I have cauſe enough to bee ſad all my dayes.

Min. What cauſe have you more then others? it is a dutie to rejoyce and be merrie, faith hath a peculiar joy annexed to it.

Neigh. How can ſuch a wretch as I am rejoyce at any time, in any thing; having ſo provoked God all my dayes as I have don? for what am I but an ungodly wretch? O how can ſuch a grievous ſinner rejoyce at all!

Min. What ſin doe you love

love or delight in, or practice at all? if you live in a ſinfull courſe, I am much deceived; and ſo are other of the neighbours, who judge not ſo of you, as to be a ſinner (in the Scripture ſenſe) ſuch a ſinner as God heareth not.

Neigh. Whatſoever you judge of mee, or others, I know what I am, beſt of all others: and I am ſure I tranſgreſſe in all I do; there is not a day comes over my head, but I breake out into ſomething or other which I am forbidden, and leave undon many duties expreſly commanded.

Min. Say you doe it:

who doth not ? I would faine ſee ſuch a man, as (if he enter into a due ſearch of himſelfe) ſhall not finde many failings,& oftētimes groſſe evills : but what of that? you do confeſſe them, and they are grievous unto you, and burthenſome, are they not ? would not you be rid of them ?

Neigh. Be rid of them ſay you ! who would not be rid of their ſin and corruption ? I can take no comfort in hearing, they ſtop my mouth in praying, and diſcourage mee in my calling ? but I thinke it is impoſſible to be rid of them.

Min. Impoſſible, man ? man

how dare you ſay ſo? is there any thing too hard for God? Men may ſo conceive indeed, but with God all things are poſſible, and all things are poſſible to him that beleeveth.

Neigh. I have been thus perplexed a long time, and uſed all means to get freedome, and yet am in bondage, and cannot get libertie by any means.

Min. It may bee you have uſed ſome meanes, but not that meanes which you muſt uſe, or elſe never get rid of ſuch diſtreſſes as long as you live, but rather increaſe it more and more, and intangle your ſelf daily

with new ſnares, and throw your ſelfe into ſtrange perplexities, and at length fall to flat deſperation.

Neigh. I hope I have uſed the right means, which God requireth. I am ſure I have heard many ſermons and I do attend the beſt Miniſter I know; and we have a good one of our own, and him I heare on Sabbath dayes continually: & I have read good books, and do read the Bible: and I have made my cauſe knowne to many good Miniſters, and they have done what they can, to comfort, & eſtabliſh me: and dayes have been ſet apart (onely for that end) of

of faſting and humiliation: & I have often renewed my vowes and covenants with God, and kept a narrow watch over my wayes; and intreated others to watch over mee narrowly, and to reprove me ſharply, if they obſerved any failing in me: and I have prayed continually, and earneſtly to God: and wee have frequent repeating of Sermons at my houſe: and in this courſe I goe on, and yet have gotten no ground of my corruptions, but they prevaile over mee more and more continually.

Min. No wonder, and will doe ſo ſtill as long as

you rest on these things; for what doe the most of these you heare, but convict you of sin? and the more you are convicted, the more afflicted: and so you pay not your vowes, nor keepe your covenant with God at all, but run into more debt; and your burthen increaseth daily: and thus it will be with you (worse and worse) as long as you hold this course, and neglect one thing, which is necessary, and onely needfull.

Neigh. I pray good Sir, what is that one thing which I doe neglect? I doe heare the word, pray, fast, keepe the best company I know:

know: and doe all that God requires, to my utmoſt: what ſhould I doe more, (that I doe not) to get reſt to my poore ſoule?

Min. You are all for doing, doing, and while you are ſo doing, you have now and then comfort; but it eft-ſoone vaniſheth, and is by and by gone againe: and then you are at a ſtand: and yet you reſolve to keepe doing, and waite on God (as you ſay) for a bleſſing: and in this courſe you may goe on all your dayes, and miſſe of comfort here, and Salvation hereafter.

Neigh. Why Sir, what ſhould I doe more then I doe?

doe? and what is that one thing that I want, that I have not yet done? I hope (by Gods grace) not to neglect it, so I may see it warranted by the Word.

Min. Your resolution is good in the generall, but you faile mightily in your judgement: for you suppose to get heaven by your doing, by your things as you here mentioned, and there is no comming to heaven that way: you may goe on in that course as you told mee, and yet bee damned, and perish eternally.

Neighbour. What other course should I take (I would faine know) then to heare

heare Gods word, and attend the best Ministers; and to reade, and pray, and waite on God? I thinke this is the way if there bee any in the world.

Min. These things may, and ought to be done; and without them no man shall see God, or be acquainted with him at all in his ordinary proceedings: but there is yet one thing you mention not in all your discours. without which all these are but vaine, fruitlesse, and utterly unprofitable: nay, the more gloriously done, the more sinfull, without that which yet you have not, or use not, for ought I see.

Neigh.

Neigh. What is that? I pray you tell me: I could never heare of any course, which I have not willingly imbraced, and submitted unto, for which I see good warrant.

Minist. See how you stand upon your justification, & see not your errour: you stand all upon doing, and willing, and you have done thus and thus, and will doe more yet, (if you might see cause) now I would have you doe nothing at all, but lay aside all your doings, and onely beleeve in him, that hath done all for such a beleever.

Neigh.

Neigh. Should I give over hearing, and praying, meditation, and faſting, and waiting? I hope I ſhall never be perſwaded to that whilſt I live, if you, or an Angel from heaven ſhould teach it mee.

Min. I like your ſpeech wel, if you underſtood what you ſay: for you have not heard mee ſay, that you ſhould not hear, read, pray, &c. but theſe things muſt not be reſted on, as if by doing theſe wee might procure favour with God, or get comfort to ourſelves: no you muſt do nothing at all that way, for that is done alreadie, and leave

leave that to Christ for ever, that hath done all for us : for hee came to doe that will of God for us, by which wee that beleeve are perfected for ever.

Neigh. Doth not faith come by hearing? and is it not increased by prayer, and confirmed by reading? would you have me neglect the meanes and expect the end?

Minist. By no meanes would I have hearing neglected, or prayer, or reading, or any such ordinance: and yet not done to procure Gods favour, or attaine praise; but rather to glorifie God, and to adorn

dorn the Goſpel of Chriſt: and as hearing is the ordinary means to get faith, it is to no purpoſe at all neither, unleſſe it be mingled with faith, but becomes utterly unprofitable and dangerous to the poore ſoule of the hearer: and prayer, that which is not of faith is ſinfull, and ſo of the reſt.

Neigh. What ſhould I do then? what courſe ſhould I take?

Min. I would have you doe nothing but onely beleeve.

Neigh. But there is a dead faith: and that faith which is without works is a dead faith.

Min.

Min. That faith which I ſpeake of, is no dead faith: it is not, nor can be without works at all: for it purifieth the heart, and worketh by love, and unites beleevers to Chriſt, and knits them one to another.

Neigh. Such a faith would I have willingly: and this is that onely which I deſire, & therfore I uſe the means to get it.

Min. How comes it, that in the uſe of the meanes ſo long, you have none at all, or very little at this time?

Neigh. Faith is Gods gift, and no man hath it but from above: and *Paul* may plant, and *Apollo* water, but it

it is God that giveth the increaſe.

Min. All this is true: but is it faith or works you moſt affect? Doe you not thinke you ſhall the ſooner attaine faith and comfort, becauſe you hear, and pray, reade, and faſt, and ſuch like?

Neigh. Surely I thinke, ſuch as doe not theſe are unworthy to have it, and I ſuppoſe they ſhall never attaine unto it.

Min. Lo here, your error and your ignorance is in this, that you ſuppoſe that a man muſt be worthy ere he can get faith: whereas it is onely by Chriſt, (in whom

whom wee beleeve) wee are worthy in GODS account.

Neigh. I thinke, that a diligent hearer, one that prayeth, & faſteth, is more worthy then he that deſpiſeth hearing, neglecteth prayer, and uſeth not to faſt: think you not ſo too?

Min. I think they are both alike worthy, little difference before they beleeve; unleſſe it be this: that one is an open and known ſinner, the other a covered and hid tranſgreſſour: and his unbelief is the greateſt, ſeeing he hath, and uſeth means, the other not.

Neigh. Then it is to no end

end to uſe the means at all, but every man may liue as he liſt, and take what courſe he pleaſe: it is all one to God, if one pleaſe God no more then another.

Min. Lo, what a deſperate concluſion you are readie to make: becauſe it is ſaid, there is no difference betweene the unbeleeving profeſſour, and the open tranſgreſſour, in point of pleaſing God: therefore it is to no end to pray, to hear and read, and to doe ſuch things as God requires.

Neigh. I conclude ſo indeed, and I ſee no reaſon for any other collection from your words.

Min.

Min. I neither say, nor think so: but I onely affirm that God accepts the one no more then the other, without another thing wch is most needfull, and that is faith in Christ.

Neigh. Faith (indeed) is an excellent grace: but how shall a man do to get it, or know when he hath it?

Min. These be necessary desires indeed, and that you may know how it is gotten, consider how *Abraham* got it, and others mentioned in the Scriptures.

Neigh. How, I pray you, did *Abraham* get his faith?

Minist. He got it not by works,

works, that I am ſure of, for then it ſhould have been of debt: and God was beholding to *Abraham*, and did but pay him his wages when he pronounced him juſt.

Neigh. *Abraham* was a good man, and of good eſteeme with God of any man: and ſurely, had not God ſeen ſome difference in him from others, he would not have dealt with him as he did.

Min. What difference think you?

Neigh. I thinke that he was more juſt, and of a better naturall condition, then other men of that time.

Min.

Min. Then belike, God was a respecter of persons, and he loved *Abraham* not for Christ, but for his justice, and his good naturall cõditions; and did not love him freely: this must not be admitted by any meanes. Alas! what was *Abraham* by nature? but under him a childe of wrath, and fire brand in the fire, an enemy to God as others.

Neigh. What was the reason that God took him, & left others, if there were no difference?

Min. His own good pleasure which he had purposed in himself, not according to his works, but according

cording to his owne purpose and grace which was given him before the world began in Christ Jesus.

Neigh. How can God be just, and the justifier of an ungodly man, as you say *Abraham* was?

Minist. This is that mystery of godlinesse which the Princes of this world cannot understād, the great School-men and Divines are altogether to seek, and yet the Apostle of the Gentiles is very cleare in the point: when he hath proved all under sin, and the whole world guilty before God: he speaks of a righteousnesse divine, the righte-

ouſneſſe of God, witneſſed by the Law and the Prophets: A righteouſneſſe of God, which is by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, unto all, and upon all them which beleeve. And ſaith further, that ſuch are juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt, whom God hath fore-ordained to be a propitiation through faith in his bloud, to declare his juſtice for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God. And this he doubleth by adding further, to declare, I ſay, at this time his righteouſneſſe, that he might be

be juſt, & the juſtifier of him that beleeveth in Jeſus; So that, though *Abraham* had alſo ſinned, and came ſhort of the glory of God, yet (beleeving in Jeſus) he through Gods free grace was juſtified juſtly; ſeeing Chriſt redeemed him by his bloud, and became his propitiation for ſin as for others, and his perfect righteouſneſſe in Gods ſight.

Neigh. You may well call this a myſterie, I confeſſe it is beyond my reach of underſtanding, how God can be juſt, and yet juſtifie ungodly men.

Miniſt. So is it farre beyond the reach of your un-

derſtanding, how a world (ſuch a world as we live in) ſhould be created of nothing appearing? or how the dead ſhould be raiſed, eſpecially ſuch as have been dead and turned into duſt many thouſand yeares ſince? how an old woman (as *Sarah* was) ſhould beare a ſonne, or a Virgin bring forth a childe, or the Sea be divided, or the Sunne go backward, or the Rocks yeeld water in abundance? and yet theſe are ſo, and muſt be beleeved certainly, though there can be no reaſon given for the truth of any of them.

Neigh. You ſay true, and

I confeſſe I muſt ſubmit and ſubſcribe to what you ſay, I dare object no further. But, I pray you, can you ſhew me any place of Scripture which ſaith expreſly that God juſtifieth the ungodly?

Min. The ſame Apoſtle handling this argument, expreſly ſaith: *To him that worketh not, but beleeveth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſſe*, Rom. 5. 4.

Neigh. This Scripture I have read often, but never underſtood it as now I do, to be ſo taken as if God did juſtifie an ungodly man.

Min. Elſe no man living

could be juſtified: for who is not an ungodly man by nature? I am ſure ſince *Adams* fall, none is free from ungodlineſſe that ever deſcended from his loins; that Lambe without ſpot onely excepted, who came not forth by an ordinary generation.

Neigh. This begins to yeeld me ſome reſt, ſeeing God juſtifies the ungodly, then I hope I may look for juſtification as well as others, for (I am ſure) I am an ungodly man.

Miniſt. This is the ſame Apoſtles Argument, to prove himſelf a ſaved, or a juſtified man, where he telleth

leth all men he was a blasphemer, a persecuter and injurious: but he obtained mercy. And lest any should doubt of it, he proves it thus: *This* (saith he) *is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of which* (saith he) *I am the chiefe.* As if he had said thus: No man can deny, but all must of necessitie grant; that Christ Jesus came into the world for this very purpose, and onely for this very end, that he might save sinners: I am the chiefe of sinners, never was there a greater transgressour then I am, there-

fore I am ſure if he came to ſave any, he came to ſave me.

Neigh. This is indeed a good ground, for Chriſt ſaith in a certain place, *I am not come to call the righteous to repentance, but ſinners:* and expreſſeth it by a notable ſimilitude: *The whole need not the Phyſician, but the ſicke.*

Min. So that now you ſee who they are on whom faith is beſtowed: and that Chriſt is not given to the righteous, but to ſinners: and that the godly are not ſuch as God doth juſtifie, but the ungodly. Remember theſe well: God juſtifieth

ſieth the ungodly, and that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, great ſinners; and you adde to this, that *David* deſcribes a bleſſed man by juſtification, as *Paul* repeats him to the Romanes: He ſaid not, bleſſed is the man that never was guilty of iniquity, or that hath no ſinne, or ſhall never ſinne againe for time to come; but he deſcribes him thus: *Bleſſed are they whoſe iniquities are covered*: here is the extenſion of bleſſedneſſe to all ſuch. And therefore he ſaith, bleſſed are they, indefinitely, (that is) all they whoſoever they be: and

then applyes it to everie particular one, by adding, *Bleſſed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute ſin:* that is, the man whoſoever he be which attaines this grace at Gods hand, as not to have his ſins imputed; let them be what they be, how many or great ſoever, yet he is bleſſed of God. Oh a happy man, where no ſinne paſt, or tranſgreſſion preſent, or iniquitie to come, ſhall ever be laid to his charge! This wee all know, that all men are ſinners; but to have ſins paſt remitted, ſins preſent covered, and ſo no ſinnes imputed; it is all one as if a man

man were free from all sin, and so from all Law, curse, and condemnation for sin.

Neigh. So that you conclude, that the person justified is, and must be an ungodly man, a sinner: and that to justifie with God, is not to finde a man just, and pronounce him so; as men use that deale justly: for it is injustice in man to justifie the ungodly; but God that quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that be not, as though they were; finds a man in the goare bloud of his sinne and iniquitie, and makes him just by taking away his iniquitie, and forgiving sin past.

paſt, and by not imputing ſinnes preſent, or accounting him a ſinner, becauſe he is not quite rid of ſin, but giving faith freely to this ungodly one whom he juſtifieth: he for Chriſts ſake forgives all iniquities paſt, and by the perfect righteouſneſſe of Chriſt covers the ſinne, never imputing tranſgreſſion thenceforth for ever.

Min. You do well expreſſe what I have ſhewed you before. So that the way to get Faith is not by reſting upon any out-ſide profeſſion, or ſuch performances you ſpake of at firſt; but ſeeing a mans ungodlineſſe

godlineſſe by the Law, and having no other ground of expectation but death and condemnation for ſin and iniquitie: in ſuch a caſe to ſet the eyes upon Chriſt Jeſus revealed in ſome promiſe, and that not only for ſalvation and no other: but by the forgiveneſſe of ſins, and the not imputing of ſinne by the imputation of Chriſts righteouſneſſe through beleeving. For this was the end of his lifting up, to draw all men unto him, (that is) ſuch men as finde themſelves to need ſuch exaltations: and this is the end of all preaching, to bring men to beleeve; there-

therefore is the Law preached to emptie men of themselves, and to shew their miserie, that denying themselves they may be brought by the Gospel to beleeve on him that justifieth the ungodly.

Neigh. What a wretch have I been, who have read the Scriptures often, and heard the same things, and yet never could conceive of this truth thus, but have had a zeale not according to knowledge: for I have laboured to establish my own righteousnesse, as being utterly ignorant of this righteousnesse of God, wch you so describe. But I pray, proceed

proceed to expresse that way of beleeving which seems now more easie then ever I conceived it; for I have still expected some strange wonderfull assurance to be wrought by the holy Spirit in a marvellous manner: and to this end I have fasted and prayed, and heard, and waited when God would perswade me of his favour, by giving me inward comfort after all my sorrowing: and now I begin to see that faith must have its footing upon some promise; and that it is onely by and through Christ, that any promise can be challenged, or at all rested upon by us. *Min.*

Min. You apprehend truly, and expresse your apprehension well: But that wee may clearly see the mystery, I shall turn you to a story in the old Testament: where the people, when some of them were bit by fiery Serpents and died, some came to *Moses* and said, *We have sinned, for wee have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray unto the Lord that he may take away the Serpents from us: and* Moses *prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto* Moses, *Make thee a fiery-Serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to passe, that every one that looketh*

keth upon it ſhall live. And Moſes *made a Serpent of braſſe, and ſet it upon a pole, and it came to paſſe, that if a Serpent had bitten any man, when he looked on the Serpent of braſs, he lived.* The people here were ſlain by theſe ſerpents, all that were bitten, died: the reſt intreats *Moſes* prayers for them, but cannot obtaine the taking away of the Serpents; only God gives them a cure: the Lord ſent the Serpents as a puniſhment for ſinne, and could have removed them as eaſily, if he would: but by that to teach us higher things, he leaves the Serpents to bite us ſtill, but gives us antidote or

remedy to preſerve us from death. A brazen Serpent muſt be made, ſet on high, that all might ſee him, that were at any time bitten, and ſuch as looked on that Serpent, lived: they here reſt contented, and being bitten look to the brazen Serpent and live. They do not ſay, What? ſhall ſuch looking do us good? we will prove other meanes to cure us, and if they helpe not, in caſe of neceſſitie or extremity rather then periſh, we will look on that Serpent. They did not labour to prevent the poyſoning operation of thoſe fiery bitings by other means firſt, and look

look afterward: but they look firſt, & reſt upon that (onely) looking for cure: This Chriſt applyeth to himſelf, and our beleeving on him, in that diſcourſe of his with *Nicodemus*, where he ſaith: *As* Moſes *lifted up the Serpent, ſo ſhall the Sonne of man be lifted up.* Even ſo, that *whoſoever beleeveth on him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* So that, as they who were then in danger of death, did looke with the eyes of their bodies unto that brazen Serpent onely for cure and preſervation from death, and found it: So all that are hurt by deaths

deaths ſting, which is ſinne; as the ſame Apoſtle witneſſeth, and do finde that ſting to have wounded them to death by force of the Law (for the ſting of death is ſinne, and the ſtrength of ſin is the Law) ſuch doe now looke on Chriſt, which is the end of the Law, or rather the perfection of the Law for righteouſneſſe to all them that beleeve: they doe now ſeriouſly look off from all things below, or in themſelves, or in any creature: and denie all, as counting it (not only inſufficient, but) abominable, and filthie in compariſon of Chriſt. To him

him bend thy look, and on him onely do thou rest for cure & prevention of death eternall, and for perfect health and possession of everlasting life.

Neigh. Is this saving Faith, to see Christ, or to look upon him onely for salvation? If it be so, then it is not so difficult a thing to beleeve as I have conceived it to be: for I have supposed it to be the hardest thing in the world, and have strove for it these many yeares, yea, I would have parted with all for this precious thing you describe.

Min. Faith is indeed a very

very precious thing: but it is not faith that saves (to speak properly) but Christ Jesus onely applyed by faith. And that you may be incouraged to beleeve, know further, that the same Apostle doth mightily prove, that it is not so difficult a thing as some imagine it, nor so far from the sonnes of men as some would perswade: for as it was the policie of our adversary the Devill, to perswade that the Scriptures were so hard that none of the learned could understand them: So it is the policie of some Preachers to make people beleeve, that it

it is ſo hard to beleeve, that as thoſe then would be hanged upon for the knowledg of the Scriptures, ſo theſe now would keepe all men under them in the myſtery of beleeving.

Neigh. It is to be feared that you ſpeak too truly in this: for I have heard ſuch diſputes about it, and read ſuch controverſies, and doe find men ſo diverſly minded; ſome ſo over-confident; and others ſo diffident; that I cannot but admire how any comes to beleeve, and ſurely have thought it a thing impoſſible to attaine to any undoubted certainty of ſalvation in this life.

Min.

Min. It is not so difficult to beleeve, as the Apostle testifieth plainly, where he saith: The righteousnesse of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or who shal descend into the deep? (that is to bring Christ up again from the dead) but what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, evē in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of Faith which wee preach; that if thou shalt confesse with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt beleeve in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the

the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. If this be ſo, where is the difficulty of beleeving which ſome urge? So the Apoſtle tels us here is no labour required, no climbing nor digging: it is not gotten by mens indeavors, but it is the free gift of God, and near unto all, as it is ſaid of God, *In him we live, move, and have our being:* and therefore he is not farre from every one of us, and may be ſought after, and felt, and found. So the ſame Apoſtle tels us here, that the word of faith is near us, and need no other labour but beleeving: that is, aſſenting to, and im-

bracing, and confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and beleeve in their hearts that God hath raised him up from the dead againe. And confesse you not with your mouth that he is Lord of all? and Jesus is the Saviour of all that do beleeve? If so, here is a promise of salvation to you, and this is no such nicity and difficultie, as many a fond Christian is made to think.

Neigh. I doe perceive, I have much dishonoured God, by denying his work in me: if this be to beleeve unto righteousnes, I doubt not but I am a true beleever:

ver: for I do confeſſe with my mouth the Lord Jeſus, I have long acknowledged him (upon all occaſions) to be the Saviour of the world, and able to ſave all that beleeve in him; and God as well as man; yea, the Lord over all. And I have alſo long beleeved, that God hath long ſince raiſed him up from the dead (according to the Scriptures) the third day after his death and buriall: and now if this be ſaving faith, I am ſure of ſalvation.

Miniſt. The more ſure you are upon this ground, the more glory doe you

give to him that justifieth you. And let me tell you, it is a sinne not to be sure: is it not a sinne to give way to any doubting of Gods eternall truth? or to question his power at all in performing his promises? You cannot beleeve too soone, too much, nor too constantly.

Neigh. Not beleeve too soon! I hear it daily taught, that some men catch at Christ before they are fit for him.

Min. Such as teach so, they teach they know not what: for who is fit for Christ? or how long shall we stay to be fit for Christ?

or

or who ſhall preſcribe what fitneſſe, and tell us when wee ſhould beleeve? Did Chriſt reject any for unfitneſſe? Did he not rather rebuke all for not coming to him for life? Was not that the ſin laid to their charge, is it not unbelief? he threateneth men for their upbraids, and chides his Diſciples for folly and ſloath in beleeving. And the Pſalmiſt ſaith expreſly: *To day if ye will heare his voice, harden not your hearts*: that is unbeliefe, as the Apoſtle expounds it, where he ſaith: To whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that

beleeved not? So we see, that we cannot beleeve too soone.

Neigh. I remember also the Jaylors example, who being a persecuter but the same night, yet being terrified with the losse of his prisoners, when the doores were open at the prayers of *Paul* and *Silas*, and brought them out and said: *Sirs, what must I doe to be saved?* And they said, *Beleeve on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house: and he rejoyced, beleeving in God with all his house.* So that it was not long ere that keeper of the prison beleeved. And the like

like may be ſaid of the Thiefe on the Croſſe, who was not long in beleeving. And *Zacheus*, *Lydia*, and that noble Eunuch, *Cornelius*, and many others, as thoſe thouſands that were pricked in their hearts at *Peters* Sermon. The like may be ſaid of the Apoſtle *Paul*, who was haſtened to beleeve by him that ſaid unto him: *And now why tarrieſt thou? ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſinnes, calling on the Name of the Lord.*

Miniſt. Loe, you have proved this point fully to my hand, by evident inſtances, and that as not too

ſoone, ſo not too much. That none can beleeve too much, is as manifeſt in holy Scripture, where it is ſaid, we may not limit the holy One: and it is called a tempting of God to limit his Majeſtie. As when we beleeve another becauſe of ſome ſeeming difficultie; as was the ſin of thoſe Iſraelites: God had given them water out of the rock, but could he provide fleſh for that people? And this is that which is checked in his Diſciples, who knew that Chriſt was Lord of all, and looked for ſalvation by him, & yet doubted about food and raiment, and

and such emptie, poore, and meane things. So another time, having heard his gracious Sermon, and seen his miracles before, yet the waves arising, and windes blowing, and Christ being asleep; they feared drowning, and were there also reproved for too little faith.

Neigh. This is evident also in the Centurions faith, which Christ remembreth for the greatnesse of it; who desired him to speak the word, and his servant should be healed. Christ said, *Verily I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* And he praiseth also the woman of Ca-

naan, who would not away, but perſevered in her ſuit for her daughter, after ſo many repulſes, ſaying, *O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

Min. You obſerve well, ſo that theſe two points are plain: if none can beleeve too ſoone, or too much. Now let us come to the third, *viz.* That no man can beleeve too conſtantly. This will eaſily be granted, that obedience is to be univerſall, for time as well as for place and things: Now this is obedience, and the onely obedience which the Goſpel requireth, that where-

whereby God is moſt glorified. *Abraham* was ſtrong in faith, and glorified God. Can we be over conſtant in glorifying God? we are to pray continually, and prayer without faith is ſinfull; therefore we are to beleeve continually, yea it is our life, wee live by it; walke by it, ſtand by it, rejoyce through it, fight with it, and are perfected by it: we live alwayes, walk continually, ſtand evermore; we are to rejoyce alwayes, wee are ſeldome free from combates of one kinde or another, in continuall hazard of that adverſary; therefore we are to beleeve continually,

ally, at all times, evermore, in all wayes, and we cannot beleeve too constantly.

Neigh. But though all this be true, that faith is not so hard as some would have it, nor to be put off, and deferred as some others say: yet it is not in any mans power to beleeve. It must be given from above, it is a gift of God, and Gods owne worke: but how we shall doe to get it, I yet clearly understand not.

Min. The onely way to get faith is, to know the necessity, and excellency of it, and our inabilitie to attain it by any power in our selves.

Neigh.

Neigh. Is Faith of such neceſſitie? I pray you what neceſſitie conceive you is there of Faith?

Miniſt. It is the onely end of preaching to worke faith in the hearers; til faith be come, the beſt profeſſour is but under the Law, and ſo under wrath; a ſervant or ſlave to Satan, condemned alreadie to hell-fire, all his dayes are but dayes of temptations, and his years, years of provocation, he remains a vexation to Gods people, a griefe to Gods Miniſters, hinders all work of grace in himſelfe, is alwayes liable to judgements, no better

better then a bloudy perſecuter, an unreaſonable wretch, and ſhall be damned, and ſhall ſhare in that everlaſting fiery vengeance, even that lake of fire and brimſtone for evermore.

Neigh. If this be ſo, woe is me that I have ſo long ſtood out, and have hindered Gods work: but what excellency is there in beleeving?

Min. This is that which ſtates us in Chriſt, and conſequently in all the good things of this life, and a better; this makes us wiſe, righteous, holy, and redeemed ones: and gives us intereſt in all the promiſes that

that attend the wise, that are made to the righteous, that wait on the holy ones, and cannot be severed from the redeemed for evermore: such as beleeve have everlasting life, and shall not taste of condemnation, nor see death, but are passed from it to life.

Neigh. If this be the benefit of Faith, then is it an excellent grace indeed: But I pray you expresse it in moe particulars, that I may be drawn up to it, when my understanding is inlightened, and I doe clearly see what attends on beleeving.

Minist. Know then, that he that is once a true beleever,

seever, is now (in respect of God) as absolutely perfect by Christ Jesus, (that is) whereas he was before stript of Gods Image by sinne and transgression, he by faith is invested with that image, and is compleat and full of grace: and consequently reconciled to God, and become one with God the Father, and the Sonne, and the habitation of the holy Spirit.

Neigh. I pray you what is the Image of God which we lost, was it the Image of his body, or something else?

Min. Of his body say you? where, where did you ever

ever read that God hath a body? It is a dangerous error so to conceive of God, for he is expresly in the Scripture said to be a Spirit.

Neigh. What is that Image then you speak of?

Min. It is that excellent knowledge which the Apostle *Paul* speaks of plainly, where he saith to the Coloſſians, *Lie not one to another, seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the Image of him that created him.* Here knowledge is said to be, after the Image of God that

that created him, (that is) the new man. So that he that hath put on knowledge, ſound & true knowledge of God, he is renewed after Gods Image.

Neigh. Is this all the Image of God?

Miniſt. Where this is, there is alſo the reſt of Gods Image, which is righteouſneſſe and holineſſe of truth, which are mentioned in that of the Apoſtle to the Epheſians; *And put on the new man which is created in righteouſneſſe and true holineſſe.* So that the Image of God conſiſts of righteouſneſſe, and truth of holines; adding to theſe knowledge, with-

without which they cannot be in uſe: and by faith all theſe are reſtored to us again, of which wee were once ſtripped, naked, and utterly deprived by tranſgreſſion.

Neigh. Where ſhall that appeare, that theſe are ſo reſtored?

Min. In the place before recited, and in that to the Corinthians, where Chriſt (to all beleevers) of God, is made *wiſedome, righteouſneſſe, ſanctification, and redemption*: (that is) not onely the loſt Image, but freedome from all the effects that follow that loſſe.

Neigh. I pray you open that

that place unto me, I have often read it, but could never rightly conceive the mystery therein contained.

Min. Great is the mystery of it, and most manifest to them that doe beleeve: for there the Apostle labours to worke unitie amongst the Corinthians, who were at odds, and did nouriſh diviſions; and the Apoſtle (having ſhewed them the danger of ſuch diviſions) removes ſome occaſions out of the way: as the ſeeming fooliſhneſſe of preaching Chriſt onely, and Chriſt crucified; and the baſe eſteeme beleevers had one of another by reaſon

ſon of the ſimplicitie or ſeeming folly, the weaknes and infirmity, and the baſeneſſe, and contempt, and naughtineſſe of ſome; and that the moſt amongſt them. To remove this, he ſaith, God hath choſen ſuch: it is his pleaſure to chuſe thoſe fooliſh ones to confound the wiſe, and ſuch weake things to confound the mighty, and ſuch baſe things, and things deſpiſed, yea things that are not to bring to naught things that are: & gives the reaſon of it, that no fleſh ſhall rejoyce in his preſence, or glory before God. And that he may utterly take away all

diſ-

diſeſteeme each of other, and work a leſſe eſteeme of themſelves, in themſelves; and an high eſteeme of others, in reſpect of each others excellency in Chriſt: he proceeds to ſay: But of him are ye in Chriſt, (that is) why ſhould you glory in your ſelves, or in men, and ſo ſwell againſt the brethren, becauſe of your owne excellencies, or be puffed up for, one againſt another, what have any that is not received? That any are in Chriſt Jeſus, it is Gods own good pleaſure: of his free grace to chooſe and call any of you, or to juſtifie any in his Sonne.

And

And you are in Christ Jesus, (that is) you are in Christ Jesus one as well as another: and if in Christ, then not to gaze one at another with contempt or disdain, but rather highly to esteeme each other; seeing not onely you are in Christ Jesus, but your grace is your excellency in Christ Jesus: for as it is of God that you are in Christ; so the same God hath made Christ unto you all wisedome, righteousnesse, sanctification, & redemption. And which is more then this, the Apostle puts in himself also, saying, *who of God is made to us*: (that is) to

to all that truely beleeve, ſound wiſdome, perfect righteouſneſſe, abſolute holineſſe, and eternall redemption; yea all of us that beleeve, how fooliſh, weak, baſe, contemptible, or of no value at all, we ſeem to the world: yet if there be ſufficient wiſedome, and true knowledge in Chriſt, God hath made ours, and Chriſt is made alſo our righteouſneſſe, and ſanctification, and redemption, to every one that beleeveth.

Neigh. I doe begin now to ſee the excellency that is in Chriſt by beleeving: that whereas they are nothing in themſelves, they are

are all things in Chriſt, the fulneſſe of him that filleth all in all.

Min. You ſee that which is ſo: for, whereas all mans miſery ariſeth from the abſence of the Image of him in which he was created, by faith he is a new creature; not in himſelf, but by faith in Jeſus Chriſt: who (of God) for the ſupply of wiſedome, is made wiſedome unto him; and for lacke of juſtice, made juſtice; and for want of true holineſſe, made perfect holineſſe, for body and ſoule, and ſpirit. And becauſe he is ſold under ſinne, and ſo to puniſhment and ven-

geance; Christ is also (of God) made redemption unto him: he is not made righteous, or wise, or holy, or redeemed by Christ: neither is it said that he is become wise, righteous, holy, or redeemed, by beleeving in Christ Jesus: all these are true, but this is much more, that whereas he was quite bereaved of wisedome and true knowledge, and sound understanding by sinne and iniquitie, and became a very foole & ignorant; Christ to him is made wisedome, (that is) all the knowledge and understanding, and counsell, direction, wisedome, and prudence

prudence that is in Chriſt Jeſus, is now become a true beleever. And whereas by ſinne he was deprived of all uprightneſſe, ſinceritie, juſtice, and integritie, and righteouſneſſe: is become unſound, unjuſt, impious, hypocriticall, and a verie worker of iniquitie: God hath made Chriſt Jeſus righteouſneſſe; (that is) juſtice, integritie, uprightneſſe, plainneſſe, and honeſtie, unto all true beleevers. And whereas ſinne had ſtript all mankinde of puritie, holineſſe, chaſtitie, and the like: God to all true beleevers hath made Chriſt, not onely wiſe-

dome, but justice, and holi-nesse, puritie, and chastitie, yea all cleannes that the holy Scripture requires. And becauſe of ſin, men having ſtript themſelves of the mentioned Image (for in theſe conſiſts Gods perfect portraiture or very character) which man having loſt, hath expoſed himſelfe to enmitie with God, and conſequently to ſinne and Satans ſlaverie, and looks for nothing but ſtroks, and ſtripes, and frownes, hard fare and meaſure, and is under chains of darkneſſe, expecting the judgement of the great day. God, to all beleevers hath made Chriſt

Jeſus

Jesus full, and eternall redemption and freedome, from all such slaverie and bondage for evermore.

Neigh. This is excellencie indeed, if we could but see it more plainly, as we might if you would be pleased particularly to run over every word, and discover what our losse is by sin, and what our gain is by beleeving, out of these words; which I suppose contain in them whatsoever may be spoken therto in the whole Scriptures.

Min. And that you may have a taste of our losse by sinne, and our gain by beleeving (as our former

words in generall do comprehend) let us therefore consider it as before, for the better clearing of it.

First in the generall, and then in particular: Generally, we are stript of Gods Image, and so emptie of all good, and utterly deprived of all hope of raising us to the former condition, by any meanes for evermore. But where faith is come, this states us in Christ, and so whatsoever grace is in Christ, that have wee for our selves. Yea, every beleever, according to that which is written, *As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the*

sons

ſonnes of God, even as many as beleeved in his Name. And after that it is written of Chriſt, that he was *full of grace and truth*. And it followeth: *Of his fulneſſe we have received grace for grace*: (that is) whatſoever grace any of us were deprived of by ſinne, yea, all the graces we have loſt by iniquitie; we do receive again in Chriſt Jeſus by that fulneſſe that dwels in him. We receiving him, do partake of the fulnes of grace (alſo) which is in him, wiſedome for wiſedome, righteouſneſſe for righteouſneſſe, ſanctification for ſanctification, redemption for

redemption, love for love, meekneſſe for meekneſſe, humility for humilitie, chaſtitie for chaſtitie, merciſulneſſe for merciſulneſſe, goodneſſe for goodneſſe, kindneſſe for kindneſs, zeal for zeal, patience for patience: yea, as the waxe receives the full impreſſion of the Seal, letter for letter; So do all true beleevers receive the Image of Chriſt, grace for grace, when they do beleeve. For God hath ſhewed herein the greatneſſe of his power in raiſing Chriſt from the dead, and giving him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his bodie, the ful-

neſſe

neſſe of him that filleth all in all. God hath made Chriſt the head over all things to his Church (that is) over all ſuch things as the Church at any time, in any age, in any ſtrait, or any member of the Church may ſtand in need of. Chriſt is given to be the head, (that is) the orderer, the conveyer, the commander, the diſpoſer of all things that the Church his body, or any member of that body may ſtand in need of; and therefore the Church is called his fulneſſe, yea, the fulneſſe of him, (that is) of Chriſt, who filleth all in all, (that

is) who filleth every member of that body of his, of his own fulneſſe: And ſo the fulneſſe of the Church is his fulneſſe. Not that Chriſt needs the Church to make up his fulneſſe, as ſome would; but that whatſoever fulneſſe the Church his body hath had, hath, or ſhall have, it is his fulneſſe, who filleth her emptineſſe: Yea and all the emptineſſe of every member of that body, with every grace that any ſuch member doth want at any time. And for this cauſe we read, that the fulneſſe of the Godhead dwels bodily in Chriſt: and we are compleate

pleate and full in him, elſe could there be no reconciliation between God and the creature, except there were a repletion or filling up again of the emptineſſe which ſinne hath made. And this the ſame Apoſtle teſtifieth in theſe words: *For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſſe dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himſelf,* (that is) all men who without him are at enmity for evermore.

Neigh. Now you have generally ſhewed our emptineſſe by ſinne, and fulnes by Chriſt Jeſus. If you pleaſe to ſhew more plainly in particulars, the effects

of

of that emptineſſe; and benefits of that fulneſſe; and wherein they conſiſt. It would much ſatisfie us that are deſirous to beleeve, and much incourage ſuch poore weaklings as my ſelf.

Min. This will be very large if it ſhould be laid open but as far as I know. But it ſhall be contracted and drawn into theſe heads: And firſt for the loſſe of knowledge, or wiſedome, that part of Gods Image: innumerable are they that enſue thereon, and attend the abſence of wiſedome: and as many are the benefits that follow in the in-

joying

joying thereof. By wiſedome here we underſtand, not humane policy, nor the wiſdome of the Princes of this world, (that is) the depth of wiſedome which ſuch as have moſt meanes to be wiſe, have attained unto: no wiſedome in terrene things, or things under the Sunne: not that wiſedome, by how much the more it increaſeth, by ſo much it increaſeth ſorrow thereby: or that which is from beneath, which is earthly, ſenſuall, and divelliſh. By wiſedome rather underſtand that which is from above, which is, firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle,

tle, easie to be intreated, full of mercie and good fruits: the wisedome which is called, sound wisedome; that which God gives to him that is good in his sight: for to such God gives wisedome, knowledge, and joy. That wisdome of God is a mystery, hidden wisedome which God layeth up for the righteous; that wisedome which was with God from all eternitie, which is nothing else but the true knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. Now the losse and absence of this wisedome or sound knowledge of God, is attended with innumerable evils: as

first

firſt of all, God hath no pleaſure with fools, there is a controverſie between God and them: they are ſubject to all errours of judgement, and break out into all foule practiſes, and groſſe abominations; ſuch are deſtitute of the love, of the fear of Gods Majeſtie, of all truſt in him: they are liable to all temporall judgements, and void of ſound joy: they love not his people, but hate them rather, and perſecute them, and if they ſo remain, ſhall ſhare in everlaſting torments in the loweſt hell.

Neigh. This is a verie miſerable condition indeed,

deed, who would remaine willingly in such an estate? and yet this is the state of most men, who know not what it is to be endued with sound and saving knowledge: who would not pitie the estate of poore ignorant souls? (if this be so, as it is most certain) But what are the benefits that follow upon the attaining of wisedome?

Min. Such are reconciled to God, God delighteth in them, they shall be kept from every evill way, and by this sinnes are subdued: they are they, who knowing the exceeding abundant riches of Gods grace,

grace to them in his Sonne, and his lovely nature in himſelfe; are now ſo farre forth raviſhed with his love, that they now truly feare him becauſe of his truth, and almighty power, which they underſtand and joy in him, as the moſt wiſe and potent diſpoſer of all things: ſo as they muſt of neceſſitie work their good and glory. Now they know his people, becauſe they ſee his Image upon them, and his Name writ in their foreheads, and they love them, and are knit to them: for Gods ſake they are free from all dangerous evils temporall, and quite rid of all

all torment eternall. And therefore SALOMON pronounces them happie that finde wisedome, and that get understanding, (that is) the man that beleeveth, to whom Christ is made wisedome and knowledge: as hath been before shewed.

Neigh. I pray you speak also of righteousnesse, as you have done of wisedome: that we may be the more sensible of the losse of it, and be more desirous to regain it by beleeving on Jesus Christ.

Min. By righteousnesse we may not understand *Civill Justice*, that morall vertue

vertue onely, (though here it's included) but it is nothing to this Juſtice: Nor yet that legall Juſtice, in which ſome have excelled: for *unleſſe our righteouſneſſe exceed the righteouſneſſe of the Scribes and Phariſees, you cannot enter into the kingdome of heaven*, ſaith Chriſt himſelfe. Therefore *Paul* accounts all other righteouſneſſe as dung for this. But we muſt underſtand a divine, and ſupernaturall, and tranſcendent righteouſneſſe, in compariſon whereof, all righteouſneſſe of ours are as filthy ragges, as the Prophet ſpeaks. The righteouſneſſe of God, of Chriſt,

Christ, God-man, who is the Lord our righteousnes, this is that justice which here we understand. God hath made Christ our justice, or righteousnes. We that beleeve know the want of such justice: the absence of this righteousnesse is the want of Gods Image: it deprives us of Gods love, his care, his eare, his eye, his kingdome promised, speciall providence, of joy, happinesse, excellency here, and glory everlasting at the great day. Whereas the having it by beleeving makes us Gods jewels, his delight, and crown of glory, a royal diadem, his spouse, invests us

us with his kingdome promiſed: we have his eye, eare, heart ſet upon us, his ſpeciall providence hedging us about, wee are prevalent with him, like unto him, and ſhall ſee him with joy in glory, and enjoy pleaſures at his right hand for evermore.

Neigh. And what may be ſaid, I pray you, of Sanctification? for I cannot heare enough of theſe priviledges. Surely they are great loſſes that we are under by unbeliefe, and Faith fills us with abundant treaſures. If theſe benefits follow upon wiſedome and righteouſneſſe, what are they

they which follow upon altogether when the image of God is fully restored?

Min. By Sanctification, understand no partiall holinesse: as an outward profession of holinesse, a separating from others: or any setting apart from any office in the Church of God, as *Jeremiah* was sanctified, or others. But by sanctification understand that holinesse of truth, or true holinesse, that holy-making which CHRIST himselfe God-man was partaker of: as everlasting wisedome, and the wisedome of God. So the everlasting righteousnesse, the righteousnesse of

of God: So alſo, everlaſting holineſſe (for holineſſe becometh Gods houſe for ever) the holineſſe of God. A through holineſſe in body, ſoule, and ſpirit: ſuch an holineſſe as makes thee to be like unto God in all manner of converſation. The wanting whereof is the abſence of Gods Image: for where one part is away, the reſt are not preſent. If a man could be as wiſe as Chriſt himſelf, and ſhould be deſtitute of righteouſneſſe, that wiſedome would not avail: or if wiſe and juſt (as before) yet where holineſſe is not, that wiſedome, that juſtice would not ſtand

(for

(for without holineſſe no man ſhall ſee God) ſo that ſuch as are void of true holineſſe, are ſtript of Gods Image, and ſo like to Satan rather then God, who is an uncleane ſpirit; ſuch can have no fellowſhip with God, who is a holy God: they are of no receiving with his Majeſtie, of no account with his Saints, they are not of his Church, are at enmitie with holy ones, and ſo diſpleaſers of Gods people, are curſed of God, and ſhall never ſtand up in his preſence, if they ſo remain. Whereas by holines of truth, they are ſure that their wiſedome is ſound, righte-

righteouſneſſe perfect and everlaſting; they have Gods Image reſtored, are of Gods fellowſhip, inhabited by the holy Spirit, are of great eſteem with God, much honoured of the Saints, and are of his Church, all faire in his ſight, without ſpot before God, and may be bold to come into his preſence, and ſhall ſtand up in the evill day, and be joyfull in glory at Gods right hand: as thoſe bleſſed ones which ſhall enjoy fulneſſe of joy, & pleaſure in his preſence for evermore.

Neigh. Sir, I have wearied you quite, yet if it be not

tedious to you, I pray you finish the opening of this text of Scripture. And I pray what is meant by redemption, and what benefit we have thereby?

Minist. How can I be wearie of such things as these? they are my meat and drink, my food and apparell indeed, and recreation. Should a man be weary of well-doing? You cannot please me better then by propounding such questions abundantly, so you receive any comfort thereby, and God may have his due glory in opening them to you. By redemption we understand, purchasing from

from something, or some condition to a better. And (not to trouble you with Etymologies of words) we shall insist onely upon one Scripture phrase: Redemption is said to be the bloud of Christ. We have sold our selves for nought, and are redeemed without money from the earth, from amongst men, from out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, from our vain conversation received by tradition from our Fathers, from our enemies, and the hand of all that hate us, to God, to serve him without feare to everlasting joy, and to

follow the Lambe where-
soever he goeth. Now be-
fore we are redeemed, we
are ſold to ſinne, to judge-
ment, to a vain converſati-
on, to the ſervice of ſinne,
and the ſlavery of Satan:
yea we remain under wrath,
in the fire, liable to ever-
laſting torments: but being
once redeemed to God, we
begin to glorifie God in
bodies and ſpirits: we now
ſerve God without fear of
enemies, in holineſſe and
righteouſneſſe every day.
We are not our own, but
are taken up in the love of
our Redeemer, exerciſed in
his praiſes: there is a mani-
feſt change in our courſes,
abun-

abundance of joy, ſuch ſing a new ſong, caſt themſelves down in the Lambs praiſe, are united to redeemed ones, expect confidently full redemption, wait for it, groane after it, pray for it, follow the Lambe without guile, are without ſpot before Gods throne, fight for the Lambe, love not their lives to death for their teſtimony, continue alwayes in the Lambes preſence, and can goe no more out. O! thus you ſee the miſery of the want of Gods Image, and the abſolute happineſſe of the reſtauration of the ſame to ſuch as it pertaineth.

Neigh. I doe see it in a great measure, and admire it also. I know these are wonderfull things, and beyond humane beleefe: how can meer men assent to such mysteries? they cannot sinke into their hearts that so great happinesse is received by beleeving. I now see the necessities and the excellencies of Faith: How shall I now get it, as at first you began to shew?

Min. I doe answer you as a beleever, but I shall answer as if you did not beleeve. Such as would have Faith (in plain terms) have it already; and so have you. The true desire of it

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was never in any soule, but such as have it first in some good measure.

Neigh. Say you so,(Sir?) then I hope I have it, for I have desired it many years, and I can say, I had rather be stript of all outward things, yea of my life; (if I could enjoy faith after death) then misse of this faith, and so be void of Christ. Alas Sir, what shall it advantage to winne the whole world and lose the soule? but you do not think it is in any mans power to beleeve?

Min. No verily, Faith is Gods gift, and comes down from the Father of lights:

yet such to whom power is given to beleeve, may, and ought to use Faith, which is often called, in holy Scripture, beleeving. And when the judgement is once truly informed, and clearly inlightened, there Faith is not absent. Such as are once taught the truth of misery, and the way to mercy; have, with that teaching at that instant, power bestowed on them to beleeve. The judgement is informed truly, the will is confirmed: so farre forth as the understanding is inlightened; what the understanding approves of, as good and necessary; the will

will imbraceth it instantly; and so we get faith by getting sound knowledge of the mystery of beleeving. And therefore Faith is said to come by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God preached.

Neigh. I understand well (I praise God) but I pray you give me some Scriptures expresly to prove, that the way to beleeving is a cleare information of the judgement, and true inlightning of the understanding; and some instances also.

Minist. For Scriptures, it is apparent in that to the Corinthians, where the

Apoſtle ſaith in the latter end of the third Chapter: *We all with open face, behold as in a glaſſe, the glory of the Lord; are changed into the ſame Image, from glory to glory.* So that when we ſee God in Chriſt, that ſight doth alſo change into the ſame Image: which proves, that the true knowledge of God in Chriſt, is attended with true faith. And therefore it is put for it, when it is written: *This is life eternall, that they may know thee, the onely true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* And if we adde that before quoted in the 2 *Corinth.* by manifeſtation of the truth:

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wee commend our ſelves to every mans conſcience in the ſight of God, but if our Goſpel be hid (that is, the manifeſtation of the Goſpel by our preaching) *it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the mindes of them that beleeve not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt (who is the Image of God) ſhould ſhine unto them.* Here it is apparent, that the reaſon why any doe not beleeve, is, becauſe they are not clearly inlightned, their mindes are blinded by the devill, leſt the light ſhould ſhine unto them: So that where the light of the glo-

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rious Goſpel of Chriſt, doth ſhine, there is Faith wrought in the hearts of ſuch to whom that light comes. For inſtance, when *Peter* convicts the people that Chriſt was God and Lord, whom they had murthered, when they were once compunct they were not farre from beleeving. When the Eunuch was made to underſtand that prophecie of *Iſaiah*, by *Philips* preaching to him, you need not bid him to beleeve. As ſoone as *Cornelius* was truly informed of Chriſt by *Peters* preaching to him, there was no great ado to work Faith in that

that familie. In a word, the true way to Faith is to get the understanding opened to understand the holy Scriptures, as it appeared in the holy Apostles and Disciples themselves, who after CHRISTS death, did stagger at him whether it were he or no, till having rebuked them, and opened their understanding, and so they beleeved: according to that where it is written, *Ye shall be all taught of God.* And, *Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Neigh. I pray you adde to all the labour of yours, some more pains to shew a ground

ground for beleeving, that my underſtanding being inlightned, I may alſo be ſure and know, that I am a beleever by beleeving as you have ſhewed, or by ſuch other meanes as you can diſcover.

Min: I have given you grounds before for beleeving, and I can but repeate them, and it may be, adde a few more. I told you God juſtifieth the ungodly: if you are ungodly, and are certain of that, you are the ſubject of juſtification: *If you confeſſe with the mouth the Lord Jeſus, and beleeve in your heart that God raiſed him from the dead, you are ſaved.*

ſaved. This you confeſſe before, and therefore you are a true beleever if it be ſo. This is that I would fain know, do you think you are by nature an ungodly one? have you been a worker of iniquitie? have you ſinne in you? do you know ſinne can never be purged out of you cleane, but that you ſhall need Gods mercy all your dayes?

Neigh. All this I ſtedfaſtly beleeve; that I am an ungodly wretch, and without Gods mercy a damned perſon: I have ſinne in me, and looke for no freedome from it, but that it will remain in me all my dayes.

Min.

Minist. Doe you not beleeve that Christ came into the world to save sinners, lost sinners; and that you are a lost sinner, in a damnable state by sinne and iniquitie?

Neigh. I beleeve this also, and doubt not of it.

Min. By whom doe you look for salvation? is it onely by Christ Jesus, or is there any other way you hope to be saved by?

Neigh. I look for salvation onely by Christ Jesus, or never look for salvation at all.

Minist. Do you thinke that Christ is able to save you, notwithstanding the great-

greatneſſe of your ſinnes, and the grievouſneſſe of your iniquities?

Neigh. I doe beleeve he is able, and doe not queſtion it, or give way to any doubt of his all-ſufficiencie.

Min. And yet are not you a beleever for all this, you are the ſubject of juſtification, you know the way to juſtification, and the meanes by whom, if ever you be juſtified. You know nothing can let it, and you need it, and what then ſhould hinder it, that you ſhould not conclude your ſelfe a true beleever?

Min. I am not doubtfull at

at all of any sinfulnesse, nor of Gods graciousnesse, nor yet of his all-sufficiencie, nor of my necessitie; and yet me thinks, I see not the signes which I am daily taught to try my faith by.

Min. What signes? I pray you remember them if you can, that we may see whether they be so necessarie or no, as you conceive: for I beleeve not that faith is so to be proved by signes as some would urge, but rather signes which are indeed works must be known by their faith they proceed from, whether they be good or no.

Neigh.

Neigh. What ſay you to the love of the brethren? we are taught that is a ſigne of Faith, and that every one may know himſelfe by that whether he beleeve or not, according to that; *We know we are tranſlated from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren.*

Miniſt. That is a good ſigne of the brethren one to another: and therefore it is propounded in the plurall number, by way of diſtinguiſhing betweene the wicked and the godly, that we may be able to diſtinguiſh the Church from the world. It is ſaid before; *In this the children of God are manifeſt,*

manifeſt, and the children of the devill : whoſoever doth not righteouſneſſe is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother. And it followeth : *Marvell not, my brethren, if the world hate you, we know that we are tranſlated from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren.* And he proceeds to ſay : *He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.* So that by this are diſtinguiſhed the true brethren, from the haters of the brethren. But ſay that this is a ſigne of Faith, yet, who can love the brethren but ſuch a one as knows firſt there are brethren, and beleeves himſelfe to be a brother,

brother, and ſo of the brethren: and that theſe whom he loves are thoſe brethren which he judgeth to be tranſlated from death to life? So that faith muſt goe before this love of the brethren, or elſe Faiths love may ſtill be queſtioned, unleſſe it ariſe from Faith: for it is Faith that worketh by love, and love muſt proceed from faith, and therefore wee rather know our love by our faith, then our faith by our love. Indeed wee declare our faith to others beſt of all other things by this unfained love of the brethren: but we muſt ſtill know, that the love

love of the brethren floweth from the love of God that begat those brethren, and the love of God flows from beleeving that God hath given Christ a ransome for us. So that as it is confessed, that Faith may be known to others by the love of the brethren, and by the labour of that love, so that love cannot be concluded to be sound and sincere, and acceptable and pleasing to God, but by Christ in whom wee beleeve, and from whom all love doth, and must flow, if it be sound and sincere, as the Apostle *Peter* saith: *Adde to your faith vertue,*

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to your vertue knowledge, and ſo brotherly kindneſſe and love: So that love muſt be added to faith in ſuch as do alreadie beleeve: and who is he who loves the brethren ſo, but his love may be ſtill liable to queſtion? is it not alwayes defective and failing? is any mans love perfect and faultleſſe out of Chriſt? if not, this is ſtill a doubtfull ſigne, ſeeing where it fails the Faith is doubted of, and longer then love continues, abounds, and ſhews it ſelfe; no longer doth it declare Faith: and ſo, if this be one of the beſt ſignes (as it is) when this trippeth, faith

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is queſtioned. And ſo may be ſaid of all other ſinnes by which we would know our ſelves to be found beleevers.

Neigh. Would you not have faith known by ſignes then?

Min. Faith ſound and true is differenced from fained and counterfeit faith, by the life and power of it: but it is rather to others then our ſelves, for wee know that life, and efficacie, and power, to be the life of faith, and to proceed from beleeving, or elſe we hold but a falſe life, a feigned power, be it zeale or what elſe ever it may be.

Neigh.

Neigh. But may not a man diſcerne his faith by his love, and his univerſall obedience, and his ſinceritie, and ſuch like? what think you of perſeverance and conſtant uſe of means for the increaſe and maintenance of it, is not that a good ſigne of true faith?

Min. But how ſhall we know whether our love be ſound, our ſinceritie of the right kinde, our univerſall obedience, our perſeverance, be pleaſing to God, and that we goe on as we ought, unleſſe we doe beleeve? Confeſſion with the mouth is a good ſigne: but how ſhall I know it good,

unleſſe beleeving with the heart doe inforce it? I beleeved, and therefore I ſpake, was the Apoſtles rule: not I ſpake, therefore I beleeved. You ſhall finde few (if any) ſuch concluſions in the holy Scriptures. This we are ſure of, that where true faith is, there is love, for faith worketh by love: and there cannot be want of ſinceritie, for faith purifieth the heart, ſuch as beleeve cannot but yeeld univerſall obedience, becauſe they know all ſuch obedience is acceptable to God: and the more obedient the better it is for thē; being they are not ignorant

rant that God commands nothing hurtfull, and such cannot but goe from faith to faith, and so from strength to strength; because they are kept by the power of GOD through faith to salvation, which they expect not till they have finished their course. So that true beleevers conclude not therefore they doe beleeve because they love, because they are sincere, because they yeeld universall obedience, or do persevere: but rather, therefore doe they know their love is acceptable, their sinceritie sound, their obedience good, their perseve-

rance profitable by beleeving.

Neigh. Are there not signes from which we may conclude directly wee are beleevers, and pawne our souls upon it that our faith is sound; as I have heard some teach; if it be thus, and so with thee, then my soule for thine, thy faith is true and sound, and such as the gates of hell cannot prevaile against.

Minist. I know no such signe upon which a Minister may so farre venture himselfe, nor any at all whereupon the beleevers soule may rest: unlesse it be the cleaving of his heart to

a promiſe, which is faith it ſelfe. This is the beſt ſigne of Faith, or meanes by which faith may be known to be true: where it hath for its foundation, Chriſt Jeſus in ſome principle or promiſe of the holy Scriptures, which he can apply to himſelfe; that being onely a ſound beleeving heart, which will not but cleave to, and dwell upon ſome particular promiſe of God revealed in the holy Scriptures.

Neigh. I underſtand not how that may be: I pray you, give me ſome inſtance of ſuch beleeving, upon ſuch a ground.

Minist. Take onely, for example, that promise on which the Father of the faithfull leaned, and to which he clave fast, and from which he started not, nor staggered about it, notwithstanding the difficulties of performance. The promise was: So shall thy seed be: Now if you consider the story, you shall finde *Abraham* a little before a victory over foure Kings, in the rescue of his brother *Lot*, after which the Word of the LORD came to *Abraham* in a vision, comforting him, and strengthening him; and *Abraham* being discontented (as

(as it were) for lacke of a childe, God took him forth abroad and ſaid, *Look now toward Heaven, and tell the ſtarres, if thou be able to number them, and he ſaid unto him, So ſhall thy ſeed be.* This is the promiſe which *Abraham* beleeved, and it was counted to him for righteouſneſſe. This is the promiſe the Apoſtle *Paul* mentioneth, where he tells us, that *Abraham againſt hope beleeved in hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations, according to that which was ſpoken: So ſhall thy ſeed be.* And addeth, that *Abraham being not weake in the faith, conſi-*

dered not his owne body now dead, when he was about an hundred yeares old: neither yet the deadneſſe of Sarah's wombe. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of GOD through unbeliefe, but was ſtrong in the faith, giving glory to God, and being fully perſwaded that what he had promiſed, he was able alſo to performe, and therefore it was imputed unto him for righteouſnes. Now this was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us alſo, and therefore that it may be imputed to us alſo, let us likewiſe take notice of ſome promiſe to reſt

reſt on. And for a promiſe, what better and more direct promiſe can we finde then that of Faith, or that word which is called the Word of Faith: *That if thou ſhalt confeſſe with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt beleeve in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved?* Here is a promiſe of ſalvation to Faith, and a deſcription of the beleever to whom the promiſe is made; the man or perſon to whom the promiſe runnes, is ſuch a one as beleeves in the heart that God raiſed up the Lord Jeſus from the dead, and confeſſeth him to

be the Lord Jesus with his mouth: that is he, whosoever he be, that doth know his want of a Saviour and salvation: and doth acknowledge the Lord Jesus to be that one onely Saviour, which is not onely willing to save (as Jesus implyes) but able to save (as Lord imports) and that this Jesus the Lord laid down his life for mans offences: and as he laid it down, so he took it to him again, and was raised up by the power of the God-head to life for mans justification. He that truly this beleeves, and expects salvation by beleeving, he shall be saved.

ſaved. Or if you will have a more plain ground of beleeving, which cannot be excepted againſt, nor oppoſed by any gain-ſayer: take that ſo worthy a ſaying, ſo faithfull of all to be accepted, or rather by all to be embraced: *That Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners.* Here is a ground for beleeving, if the whole volume of the Scripture containe any. For what can be excepted againſt him that taketh it for his ground? let him be what he will, if he ſeriouſly have recourſe to this Scripture, how can he be pluckt from it? For inſtance. I will take

take it to my selfe for my ground, I say thus: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. On this I do rest as my foundation, this I hold up as my shield: Look, here is my Rock to which I have recourse, this is my buckler with which I defend my selfe: Let the waves now beat, the raine descend, the winds blowe, this is no sandy foundation; let all the fiery darts of the devill be let loose, this is no shield, that will easily be battered: what can Satan lay to my charge? what can the Law accuse me of? what can mine own conscience affright me with? is

not

not here all anſwerable? In one word, men, devils, or any elſe, can but tell me I am a ſinner: the more grievous the accuſations, the more ſound the Concluſions for comfort to mee. Yea, ſay they ſhould object that Chriſt came not to ſave all ſinners. Could I not reply, he came to ſave all ſuch ſinners as cleave to him for ſalvation? Say they urge all penitent ſinners, and accuſe me of impenitencie. I anſwer; Impenitencie is a ſinne, this proves me but a ſinner ſtill, and concludes for me that he came to ſave me.

Neigh. This is a ſtrange and

and a strong Argument, that all accusations should frame your conclusions, and all mens that sticke to it, as I perceive by your urging of it: Surely it begins to yeeld me sound comfort when I consider it: I see not which way a man that sticks fast to it, should be shaken or moved.

Minist. It is not possible that the gates of hel should prevaile against him that imbraceth it, and will not off from it: indeed if a man will be beaten off, there is an adversary will lay about him, and hath fiery darts enough to sling at us, and will

will beſtir him every way: but if you obſerve the Apoſtles manner of propounding of it, and for what cauſe; you ſhall yet ſee the ſtrength and force of it to be much more then yet you conceive. He tels us before, that he was a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and injurious: but he obtained mercy, for he did it ignorantly in unbeliefe, and the grace of God was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus. Now leſt any ſhould doubt whether *Paul* was not deceived, but had obtained mercy indeed and in truth; he proves it by this argument:

argument: prefacing it by the way, as that which the Reader may ſtand at, and admire: he doth not onely tell us, it is a faithfull ſaying (for ſo he ſpeaks upon ſome other occaſion) but he addeth, that which wee never finde, onely once in the holy Scripture, and that in the ſame Epiſtle too: *That it is a ſaying worthy of all acceptation*: that it is a ſaying worthie of imbracing and receiving, by all meanes not to be paſſed over ſleightly, or to be diſregarded: as all holy Scriptures is to be valued, ſo this chiefly and above all other Scriptures is by all

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meanes to be received with credit, it being the ſcope and end of all the holy Scriptures: that *Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am the chiefe*, (ſaith he.) Thus then ſtands his argument. Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners: I am the chiefe of ſinners, for I was a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, and injurious: therefore hee came into the world to ſave me. And he addes alſo, that for this cauſe he obtained mercie, that in him firſt, or chiefly, as he was chiefe of ſinners, Chriſt Jeſus might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering for

a patterne to them who ſhould hereafter beleeve on him to everlaſting life. So that *Paul* proves he had obtained mercy by this faithfull ſaying. So may every true beleever prove his happineſſe the ſame way. *Paul* tels us what he was, what he is, and doth it by way of example, patterne, or inſtance to beleevers. So that once againe I ſay, thus Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners: I am a ſinner, if I were, or had been a perſecutor, or injurious to the Saints: if I had bound and haled men and women to priſons, and compelled them to blaſpheme

pheme or contradict: if I had aſſiſted their putting to death in my ignorant rage againſt the power of godlineſſe; yet could I conclude that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave me. And if any ſhould object (as before) he came into the world to ſave repentant ſinners, and beleeving ſinners, I ſhould ſtill reply: My repentance, or that unbeliefe which I am guiltie of, it is but ſinne; Chriſt Jeſus therefore came to ſave me. If they ſhould urge further: But ſuch as Chriſt came to ſave, he came to make wiſe, juſt, and holy; and to free them

them from the power of many sinnes, and slaverie of some evils, to which I am subject. I answer still, that any folly, or injustice, or corruption which remains in me, is but sin, and that slavery which I seeme to be in, is but the effect of sinne, Christ Jesus came to save sinners, not from sins quite onely, but from the punishment also, and from all the evils: and God hath made him wisedome, righteousnesse, sanctification, and redemption eternall, (as you have heard before) therefore he came into the world to save, and sanctifie, and justifie, and make me wise

wiſe unto eternall life.

Neigh. I thank you for this; and bleſſed be God that he hath revealed the myſterie to the ſonnes of men. I cannot ſee how there can be any dangerous oppoſition to that ground, it is to me the beſt buckler that ever I could apprehend in all the holy Scriptures: for I ſee many promiſe, but on ſuch conditions as they ever become liable to queſtion, and ſubject to doubting: and I could finde no reſt for the ſole of my foot on any one to this day. But now the ſubject of ſalvation being a ſinner, as the object of juſtifi-

justification in regard of God, being an ungodly one, these settle me in the faith, and I have arguments enough to prove my selfe a justified one, and a saved one; for a more ungodly wretch there was never, nor a greater sinner the world never saw: I suppose then, I am, I may well say I am chiefe: for I see something in others, but in my selfe a world of ungodlinesse, a sea of sinne, and a very fountain of all manner of iniquitie.

Minist. The more sinne is acknowledged, and the danger apprehended, the more certainly granted,

and

and the more is ſalvation appropriated; where ſinne aboundeth, there grace much more abounds; the depth of miſery ſhall finde a farre greater depth of mercy. Gods power moſt appeareth where mans frailtie moſt preſſeth: as to that Apoſtle, *My grace is ſufficient, for my power is manifeſt in thy weakneſſe.*

Neigh. But how are the promiſes appliable where there are conditions urged? as, If we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged of the Lord: and, If we confeſſe our ſinnes, and forſake them, we ſhall finde mercy: O *Bleſſed are the poore*

poore in spirit, for theirs is the kingdome of heaven: and such like?

Min. All such promises, of whatsoever nature, runne to faith, by which onely wee performe the condition: for who can judge himselfe perfectly, or can confesse and forsake sinne absolutely, or is truly poore in spirit? if we shall examine every Circumstance of povertie in spirit, and the like, where shall any such man become, but his owne selfe-judgement, it will be liable to exception, his confessing and forsaking sinne faultie, and his povertie of spirit full of pride

pride and exaltation?

Neigh. How ſhall wee then apply theſe promiſes, and make them ours, if it be ſo that they are ſo difficult, and wee having not the condition exactly in our ſelves: as, that ſorrow for ſinne, that fruitfulneſſe of fervent prayer, and ſound reformation which God cals for?

Miniſt. This is that which is difficult indeed, to be rightly underſtood, and truly applyed to any: For he that ſhall look for any of theſe in himſelfe, and thereupon conclude he may beleeve, ſhall never beleeve: becauſe ſome

defect in these will alwayes appeare, and the condition must be fully found, or the application will be wavering and full of doubts, the confidence shaken ever and anon: and therefore all that a beleever may, or can, or ever shall be able to finde in himselfe, is onely this: that he is destitute of all these, and he may see what he should be, never what he is, and so look to Christ for full supply, or goe without all solid comfort in any promise at all.

It was Christ that judged himselfe, having taken mans sinnes upon himselfe:

ſelfe: it was he that confeſſed ſinne, and forſooke it truly: he had true ſorrow for ſinne: in him were all thoſe fruits found: he was poore in ſpirit; and ſo of all other conditions that may be mentioned; wee may be bold to ſay, they muſt be looked for where they are, that is, onely in Chriſt Jeſus, and by Chriſt Jeſus doe all theſe bleſſings flow unto us: *For in him, and through him, and by him, are all things onely. All the promiſes of God in him are yea and Amen.* The promiſes are yea in themſelves, but nay to us without Chriſt: for they

are made on such conditions as deny them us if they be challenged that way: but in Christ they are all yea and Amen to every one that beleeveth, for he is the promise and the condition, and so faith makes us not onely lay hold on the promise, but makes us to have performed the condition: it makes us poore in spirit, true mourners, meek, high valuers of righteousnesse, and desirous of it, mercifull, pure in heart, peace-makers, and right sufferers for righteousnesse sake, and so fixeth blessednesse upon us, and yeelds us the kingdome of Heaven,

ven, ſound and laſting comfort, the inheritance of the Earth, to be filled with everlaſting righteouſneſſe: we ſo obtaine mercie, ſee God, are truly called, as we are Gods children, and are ſure of Gods kingdome here, and the great reward hereafter.

Neigh. You make faith to do all things, and ſeeme to exclude all other graces, and eſteeme them as needleſſe.

Miniſt. To Salvation and Juſtification, I know, nor acknowledge any other way but beleeving. Nay Faith ſhall be utterly excluded if it incroach

upon free Justification: I know no Faith pleasing God out of Christ, and that love which attends it, is also in Christ Jesus: for so saith the Apostle: *The grace of God was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Get Faith once, and so Christ, and you shall be furnished with graces, all fulnesse is then your owne, and shall flow from you, as hath been shewed at large before, where Christ was proved our all in all: As without him, or separated from him, they can doe nothing: so in him, and by power of his Spirit they

they ſhall bring forth much fruit, now ſhall they be putting off and on more and more, all their dayes the works of the fleſh goe off, now the former converſation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitfull luſts, doth vaniſh, lying, corrupt anger, theeviſhneſſe, idleneſſe, corrupt communication, evill ſpeaking, bitterneſſe, clamour, all malice, fornication, uncleanneſſe, covetouſneſſe, theſe are not once named amongſt ſuch: neither filthineſſe, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting; now no fellowſhip with the un-

fruitfull workes of darkneſſe can be retained: and on goes the new man, diſcovered by ſpeaking truth, honeſt labour, kindneſſe, love, circumſpect walking, redemption of time, indeavour more to underſtand what is Gods will by hearing, reading, prayer, and eſpecially giving thankes: now there is a willing ſubmiſſion of each one to another, and to all men according to ſeverall ages, ſtates, ſexes, and conditions: and all theſe not that they will pleaſe God the more, or becauſe they will eſcape Gods wrath the ſooner: but for that the love of Chriſt

Christ constraines them, and they know they must glorifie God before men, and that the doctrine of Christ may not be blamed, and that these things are good and profitable to men, that others may be constrained to glorifie our God and Father also, and these that beleeve cannot walke otherwise, for they live not, but Christ Jesus liveth in them, and faith doth transforme them into Christ, that they are cast into a new mould, and walke by the guidance of another Spirit; these are Gods sonnes, and led by Gods Spirit, and so doe

never thinke they can glorifie that God ſufficiently, nothing being more grievous unto them then Gods diſhonour, nor more pleaſing unto them then the expreſſion of the praiſes of him who hath called them out of darkneſſe into his marvellous light.

Neigh. I do underſtand you well (I praiſe God) and ſhall not trouble you but with one queſtion more, and that is this: I pray you, may a man thus beleeve, and periſh afterwards?

Miniſt. As the bitten Iſraelites, having once looked on the brazen Ser-

pent,

pent, feared death no more: So thoſe that have once beleeved on Jeſus Chriſt cannot periſh, but have everlaſting life: for ſo ſaith Chriſt: *I am the doore, if by me any man enter, he ſhall be ſaved, and goe in and out, and finde paſture.* Here is a promiſe upon entring in once, ſuch as are ſo entred in by beleeving in Chriſt, are promiſed expreſly, not onely ſalvation, but the meanes that bring them thither: for they ſhall goe in and out and finde paſture; and ſuch as heare Chriſts voice doe beleeve, and to ſuch he gives eternall life, and

they ſhall never periſh, nor ſhall any be able to plucke them out of his hand: yea, ſuch as are once received (as all true beleevers are) ſhall be holden up, for God is able to make them ſtand, and Faith is of that growing nature, it groweth exceedingly. So that ſuch as are once righteous, ſhall hold in their way, and wax ſtronger and ſtronger, as the Spirit teſtifieth.

Neigh. I am exceeding afraid in theſe evill times, leſt if I come to tryall, I ſhall not hold out, but let goe my profeſſion.

Min. There is no cauſe but you ſhould feare if you looke

looke on your ſelfe, you cannot hold out that's certain, you will eaſily give over the cauſe: but there is a Spirit in you, a Chriſt on you, a ſtronger then you, who is able (as you heard) to make you ſtand: it is not faith that makes you ſtand, that preſerves you, that keeps you; that God gives faith, and he protects you by his owne power through faith unto ſalvation. Is not Gods power ſufficient for you? Hath he not ſaid, he will never faile you, nor forſake you? So that the Apoſtle tels you expreſly, ſo that wee may boldly ſay, The Lord

is

is our helper, wee will not feare what man shall doe unto us : seeing Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever; what he ever was to any that beleeved, he is to us, and will be to all that doe beleeve to the end of the world. Hath he redeemed you ? Feare not, he hath called you by name, you are his : When thou passest through the water, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not over-flow thee: When thou walkest thorow the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee:

thee: He gave Ægypt for thy ranſome, and becauſe thou art precious in his ſight, he will give man for thee, and people for thy ſake.

Neigh. I thanke GOD for your helpe, and this ſtrong conſolation I have received: I hope I ſhall be the better for this dayes Conference as long as I live.

Miniſt. If you retaine theſe in memory, they will lead you on to much more in holy Scriptures: onely forget not theſe, but call them often to your remembrance; eſpecially in whom, and by whom you have all

ſound

sound cause of comfort: and know, that he that hath kept you till this day, will preserve you, and present you blameless before his own presence with exceeding joy: To whom be glory, and honour, dominion, and power, ascribed now and for ever. *Amen.*

Neigh. Amen.

FINIS.

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Quicken me after thy loving kindneſſe: ſo ſhall I keep the teſtimonies of thy mouth. Pſal. 119. 88.

I am thine, ſave me: for I have ſought thy precepts. Pſal. 119. 94.

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